



Daily current affairs

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Environmental flows (Rivers)

Why in News?

The Central Government today notified the minimum environmental flows for River Ganga that has to be maintained at various locations on the river. The notification of e-flow for the river would go a long way in ensuring its Aviralta or continuous flow. Reiterating the Government's commitment towards an Aviral and Nirmal Ganga

Environmental flows are the acceptable flow regimes that are required to maintain a river in the desired environmental state or predetermined state.



Ro-Ro service to Majuli Island

Why in News?

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) will be starting a first Roll on-Roll off (Ro-Ro) facility in collaboration with the Government of Assam to provide the much-needed connectivity for Majuli Island.

Majuli Island

- Majuli is one of the biggest riverine islands in the world located on river Brahmaputra and faces serious challenges of connectivity
- The island is formed by the Brahmaputra River in the south and the Kherkutia Xuti, an anabranch of the Brahmaputra, joined by the Subansiri River in the north.
- It was formed due to course changes by the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries, mainly the Lohit. Mājuli is the abode of the Assamese neo-Vaishnavite culture.

Environmental aspect

- A wetland, Mājuli is a hotspot for flora and fauna, harbouring many rare and endangered avifauna species including migratory birds that arrive in the winter season.

- Among the birds seen here are the greater adjutant stork, pelican, Siberian crane and the whistling teal.
- The island is almost pollution free owing to the lack of polluting industries and factories and also the chronic rainfall.
- The island is under threat due to the extensive soil erosion on its banks.
- The reason for this magnitude in erosion is the large embankments built in neighbouring towns upriver to prevent erosion during the monsoon season when the river distends its banks.



2nd generation Ethanol

Why in News?

The foundation stone for Second Generation (2G) Ethanol Bio-refinery of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited being set up at Baulasingha village, Bhatli Tehsil, Bargarh district, Odisha was laid by Governor of Odisha Professor Ganeshi Lal

Why Bio fuels are important today?

- Biofuels have assumed importance recently due to the growing energy security needs and environmental concerns.
- Several countries have put forth different mechanism and incentives to encourage production and use of biofuels to suit their domestic requirements.
- India has surplus biomass availability of about 120-160 MMT annually which if converted, has the potential to yield 3000 crore litres of ethanol.
- The National Biofuel Policy of India 2018 targets 20% Ethanol blending to Petrol by year 2030. However, due to non-availability of Ethanol, the current Ethanol blending in Petrol is about 3 to 4%. Setting up of 2G Ethanol plants will help achieve the target of Ethanol blending in Petrol.

What are the benefits?

- The Bio-Refineries will contribute to cleaner environment due to usage of waste Rice straw for Ethanol production thereby reducing waste straw burning in fields.
- Blending of Ethanol in Petrol will reduce Green House Gas emissions as compared to fossil fuels. The plant is based on Zero-liquid discharge plant technology where all water will be recycled back into the plant.
- In addition to cleaner environment, the project will also help improve the socio-economic conditions of the farmers due to additional income from sale of Rice straw to the bio-refinery.
- Also, this will generate employment for appx 1200 persons (both direct and indirect) during construction, operation of plant and supply chain management of biomass.
- This will boost the infrastructural development in the area and overall improvement in livelihood of people.
- Further, blending of ethanol enhances self-sufficiency of the Nation by reducing oil

imports, thereby saving foreign exchange.



Competition Commission of India (CCI)

Why in News?

The Competition Commission of India (CCI), in continuation of its efforts towards simplifying and providing greater clarity on the application of the combination provisions of the Act and the Combination Regulations, has further amended the Combination Regulations on 09th October 2018. This amendment inter alia provides certainty & transparency and expedites faster disposal of combination cases before CCI.

The Competition Act

- The Competition Act, 2002, as amended by the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007, follows the philosophy of modern competition laws.
- The Act prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and M&A), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.

Competition Commission of India

- The objectives of the Act are sought to be achieved through the Competition Commission of India (CCI), which has been established by the Central Government with effect from 14th October 2003.
- CCI consists of a Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government.
- It is the duty of the Commission to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.
- The Commission is also required to give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.

National Council for Vocational Education and Training

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the merger of the existing regulatory institutions in the skills space - National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) and the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) into the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET).

About

NCVET will regulate the functioning of entities engaged in vocational education and training, both long-term and short-term and establish minimum standards for the functioning of such entities.

The primary functions of NCVET will include

- Recognition and regulation of awarding bodies, assessment bodies and skill related information providers
- Approval of qualifications developed by awarding bodies and Sector Skill Councils (SSCs)
- Indirect regulation of vocational training institutes through awarding bodies and assessment agencies
- Research and information dissemination
- Grievance redressal.

The Council would be headed by a Chairperson and will have Executive and Non-Executive Members. Since NCVET is proposed to be set up through merger of two existing bodies, the existing infrastructure and resources will be utilized for the most part.

